

SHERLOCK HOLMES IN THE CASE OF THE

MISSING MARTIAN



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DOUG MURRAY • TOPPER HELMERS

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SHERLOCK HOLMES IN THE CASE OF THE MISSING MARTIAN

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Four of Four

INTRODUCTION BY DOUG MURRAY

All right—I've spent the text pages of the last three issues giving you an insight into me, my childhood, my likes and dislikes—all sorts of things about myself. Enough already.

You've read all four books now, suffered through all my private little fantasies—now it's time to give credit to the rest of the gang—tell you a little something about them and how I involved them in this project.

First, the artist for the interiors: Topper Helmers.

I got to know Topper about seven years ago. He was a member of the DC apprentice program living in Florida, and he'd decided to make the move to New York—get closer to the offices, make it a little bit easier to get work.

He made a trip North to scout out places to live—even brought a couple of animation cels along to sell for extra bucks—finance his move.

I collect animation cels, and one of the shops he offered them to was owned by a friend of mine—he got us together and we hit it off right away. The rest is history (hey, it's my story, I can use hyperbole if I want to).

Topper started doing this and that for DC—and to keep he and his wife from starving, I got him a job with the bank I was working for—what good is being a member of management if you can't help your friends, anyway?

We worked together at the bank for a few years—Topper kept grinding out the comic work—and started to recharge my own comic batteries. I'd tried to make it as a comic writer in the early '70s and then stopped when I realized that I was going to starve if I kept it up. I'd gone into business then, but Topper was getting me to think about writing—and when Larry Hama offered me some work on *Savage Tales*, I was ready to make another plunge into the field.

Meanwhile, Topper was doing stuff for *Weird War Stories* and working on a project of his own—he loved Rafael Sabatini and his stories of pirates and the Caribbean—and he'd come up with a character named *The Black Kite*, who he wanted to use in a series.

**Sherlock Holmes in
The Case Of The
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Topper Helmers. The
Sherlock Holmes

characters appear by

arrangement with

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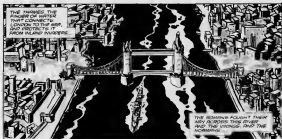
Continued On Page 31

















FROM THE AIR OF LONDON IS FILLED WITH THE BLACK ROLLING GUNS OF WAR, AGAIN THE HIGH-PITCHED SCREE OF THE HEAVY BOMBS IS HEARD ...

THEY GO ON TO DIE IN THE DEFENSE OF QUEEN'S BAY COUNTRY ...

APRIL



THE STUNNING, DISRUPTED FORCE OF THE BATTERY BLAST, DOES LITTLE BETTER ...

WITHIN SECONDS ITS BLAZE AND SILENT, THEIR CORPSES DEAD OR DYING. THE HEAVY ART PLUNGES OVER ITS RECK, LEAVING PLANE IN ITS WAKE ...

BEATEN, THE GREATEST SHIP SINKS AS ITS POWDER MAGAZINE EXPLODES. THEN SLOWLY, RELUCTANTLY, IT SLIPS SLOWLY BETWEEN THE SURFACES ...



STILL, THE SOLDIERS KEEP FIGHTING, FIGHTING EVEN AS THEIR COMPANIES FALL, KILLED BY GUNS, KILLED BY AIR ...



KILLED AS THEY TRY TO COME TO GRIPS WITH THE ENEMY ...

ON AND ON THEY FIGHT, GIVE, FINALLY, THEY HOLD HARD AGAIN ...



LIVE AN OVER-WEIGHTED SPREAD, THEIR SPIRIT BREAKS, AND THEY COME BEING SOLDIERS AND BECOME IT MORE ...

A NOW THAT MEETS ONLY TO FLEE THE GREAT WILLAG MARCH ...



AS THEY RUN, THE BRONZE
KILLS THEM, DISMEMBERING
THEIR FOCUSING ON DEFENSE-
LESS BACKS, TURNING THEM
TO BLOOD AND FLESH AND
DUST...



THEN IT IS OVER.
BRONZE MOVES HIS
MACHINE FORWARD,
STEPPING COMEPLY
INTO THE WATERS OF
THE THERMIS...

THE LAST BRIDGE
BETWEEN THE AND
LONDON



MILITARY BRIDGE.
HE STAYS FOR A
MOMENT, GRACING AT
TOWER BRIDGE, FROD
ADJUNCT OF VIC-
TORIAN ARCHITECTURE.

CAREFULLY,
HE STUDIES IT,
TOWN STILL
CAREFULLY...



HE PLAYS HIS NEXT MOVE
ACROSS IT, MAKING SURE
TO HIT EVERY INCH OF IT...

MAKING SURE TO LEAVE
NOTHING RECOGNIZABLE
BEHIND HIM















I SAY, HOLMES:
THIS IS
BUTTERBURN—
BUT WHO IS THE
FELLOW WHOSE
DID HE COME
FROM?

COME NOW,
BUTTERBURN! THIS
IS ALL OUR
BROTHER OF OURS
BURNING EVEN
NOW...

DON'T
BLAME
THE
DOCTOR
YET, IT'S
BEEN
MANY
YEARS.



ONE WITH
THOSE GOGGLES.
HAD ALL THIS
GREAT...

I SAY
GODDAMN
IT IS



WOMAN? WOMAN?
OF THE UNIVERSALITY
IS IT REALLY YOU?

IN THE FURNACE,
DOCTOR—AL-
THOUGH IF WE
DON'T STOP
THAT MACHINE.

THEY
GIVE US
WELL-BETTER
FURNACE—THE
GIVEN IS
DETERMINED
ON US?













HOLMES!
EVEN HERE (ALMOST)
IT IS HOLMES! BUT
THIS TIME I HAVE THE
ULTIMATE WEAPON!

ALL I
HAVE TO DO
IS TURN AROUND
GET A WEAPON
TO SHOOT



EXETER
WITHOUT! HE
IS GETTING
ON THE AIRCRAFT
POINTED IN OUR
DIRECTION...



BUT AS HOLMES
MOVES TO TURN THE
MACHINE AROUND THE
MACHINE'S GEAR
WORKING JACK GOES
BACK...

USED TO PULL AND
PUSH THE GEAR
THROUGH SEVERAL
MACHINE'S GEAR, THEY
GOON AND THEREFORE
RUIN THE MACHINE.



BEFORE THEY
REACH TO THE
MACHINE...

THEY CAN ONLY GO ON AND ON...



INTOLERABLE PAIN
STRIKES INTO THE
PROFESSOR'S, FROM
EVERY SIDE, EVERY
DIRECTION...



BUT AS HE CONFRONTS
HIS BACKWICK BRUISES
AGAINST THE MACHINE'S
MILD, BUT SHATTERING...



AUTOMATICALLY MORRISSEY IS
COULDED AS SOON THE
LIGHT FLUNG FROM HIS
BODY, BURNING, BITING
DEEP INTO FLESH AND
BONE...



HE FEELS THE BACK
COUNTRY, AND AS HE
SCREAMS WITH THE
PAIN, HE FEELS A DIS-
PROPORTIONATELY GREAT
SPARKING RISE IN
DELICATE CONTROLS.

CONTROLS WHICH SHORTLY
CUT, SENDING SURGES OF POW-
ER INTO CHANGING OBJECTS INTO
OVERHEATED WORLD...



SECONDS LATER, THE
CORE OF THE MACHINERY
IS A HELL OF
LIGHTNING AND EXPLODING
EQUIPMENT.

AND THE SURFACES OF
A MAN WHO SEES HIS
SELF AS THE MASTER
OF THE WORLD.







SHERLOCK HOLMES IN THE CASE OF THE MISSING MARTIAN

INTRODUCTION BY DOUG MURRAY (continued from inside front cover)

Time passed—*The Black Kite* became *Shogun*, and Topper moved from New York to California. He spent his time on a variety of art projects, from prints to storyboarding. I stayed in the East Coast cold and created *The Nam*. When that gave me a chance to do *Missing Martian*, and I got the opportunity to pick my artist—well, only one came to my mind. Topper and I had never managed to work on a project together—now was our chance.

Now, as to the covers:

In 1987, my wife and I (who are, as you'll remember, science fiction fans) made a trip to England. We were going to Brighton for the World Science Fiction Convention. The trip gave us the opportunity to not only take in the convention and rub elbows with the elite of the field, but also to sightsee in London, Stonehenge, Oxford, anywhere in England we could reach in the two weeks or so we'd planned.

On the very first day of the convention, we met a young artist named Iain McCaig. He was sitting at a table near the entrance to the Dealer's Room signing posters—reproductions of the cover of a book he'd done for Steve Jackson Games. The posters were beautiful and his artwork impressed me tremendously. It combined a finesse of line with a drawing skill seldom seen in modern illustrators. The three of us got to talking about artwork and sci-fi and the world. Before we knew it, Iain was a friend.

We ended up seeing a lot of him. It turned out that he lived near Stonehenge, which we both wanted to see—and our day-trip to the site turned into a late-night visit with Iain and his wife.

When we got back to the states, I recommended Iain's work to the people at *Adventure Comics*. They loved Iain's stuff, and he did a number of beautiful covers for them.

That gave him the extra money to make a trip to the U.S. last year. He came for the 1989 Worldcon in Boston. There he met a number of the U.S.'s sf and Fantasy artists, and was

able to contract for a number of covers for U.S. paperbacks.

When the people at *Eternity* agreed on painted covers for *Missing Martian*, Iain immediately came to mind. He was ideal. When he agreed, I was able to make the next step.

My wife, Pam, is an artist in her own right. She is a sculptress, doing fantasy creatures for a large Pewter company, a painter, coloring those same creatures and others, and an illustrator, having done covers for a number of fanzines and journals.

She is not, however, very confident of her own talents.

When Iain agreed to do the covers to *Missing Martian*, he and I decided to force Pam to show her talents. Iain would do the covers in pen and ink only. The colors would be added by Pam.

And that's why the covers are collaborations between McCaig and Murray—it's not me, Iain, it's my wife.

And those are the players. Chris Ulm, who's editing for *Eternity*, has been a dream to work for—available, but noninterfering—I only wish all editors worked that way. Maybe we'll get to do something else, after all, we never did find out who was really doing those Ripper killings, did we?

And then there's Captain Nemo—he was around in the 1860s, did Holmes ever meet him?

Or Robur the Conqueror? How about the Phantom of the Opera?

Maybe some other time...

Doug Murray

February, 1990